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31 July 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR: AD/NE

25X1 FROM : [redacted]

SUBJECT : Coordination Problems

I. Procedural

1. A number of estimates done in the Soviet field, especially those affecting military, scientific, and economic developments, have come to involve a greater and greater depth of technical detail. The problem has been to insure that the estimates fully reflect the knowledge of specialists but at the same time do not become excessively technical documents unintelligible to the regular NIE consumers.

a. In some fields, notably guided missiles and air defense, we have employed the device of having coordinated contributions submitted by technical IAC subcomittees. The principal disadvantages have been that this process is time-consuming and that issues tend to be fought over twice, once in the committee preparing the contribution and again by the IAC representatives themselves. We shall attempt to overcome this latter difficulty by requiring in future that subcommittees pass dissents on without resolution to the IAC representatives.

b. We have also employed the device of involving particular agencies in pre-coordination outside and prior to the regular representative meetings. On the last two Soviet estimates ORR and OIR did this in order to reduce the range of issues on estimates of the Soviet economy. This procedure saved time and reduced disputes in representatives meetings and this year in the 11-4 paper we shall employ the same device on some difficult issues in the Soviet military field.

c. Some specialized estimates have been passed to technical committees almost entirely, for example the 11-2 estimate has been done by JAEIC with only nominal Board participation. An estimate on Soviet science done in 1956 was written by OSI and passed to ONE for editing.

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2. One increasing source of difficulty in coordinating some papers over the last year or two has been the growing division between the military services on certain estimates of Soviet military developments. These are not intrinsically intelligence issues but reflect disagreements between the services on certain aspects of US military policy. These differences have become deep and rigid enough to make agreement on some intelligence judgments all but impossible. There has clearly been a loss of objectivity on the part of some participants and party-line dissents are more frequent.

3. The routine of the coordination process over the years has produced certain problems. One is a fatigue of language, the increasing difficulty of couching estimates in fresh and pungent verbiage. Certain verbal formulae have tended to be sapped of meaning by repetitious use or to acquire esoteric values for the participants in the coordination process, with consequent loss of power to communicate to general readers. There is also the phenomenon of IAC representatives becoming professional meeting-goers with a personal stake in certain reiterated positions. Sometimes these latter may not be truly representative of departmental views.

II. Substantive

The following is a list of most of the main issues which have given difficulty in recent EE estimates. It is fair to say, however, that delays and difficulties in coordination have been due much more to verbal disputes than to substantive ones.

1. Soviet military strategy: The dissents in 11-4-56, the first paper in which we succeeded in coordinating on the subject at all, tell the story. It has been O/ME's view, pressed with little success for some years, that an appreciation of Soviet strategic conceptions -- in a political-military sense rather than narrow campaign strategy -- was essential to estimate future Soviet military developments. We made some progress last year but sharpening inter-service divisions will make this subject more difficult than ever in 11-4-57.

2. Related more specific issues include (a) the future size and configuration of Soviet Long-Range Aviation; (b) the point in

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time at which guided missiles will begin to affect the procurement of other weapons and the organizational structure of Soviet forces; (c) the size of the Soviet submarine force; (d) the allocation of fissionable material to alternative weapons systems; (e) the over-all personnel strength of Soviet forces.

O/NE has pushed the device of estimating in these fields by positing requirements. This is, especially in the absence of detailed estimates on Soviet strategic plans, an unsatisfactory approach in many ways. We have urged (a) that the community be satisfied with more tentative estimates rather than pretend that the selected numbers are enshrined truth, and (b) that we be more modest about trying to push precise estimates into the far future. On this latter point, our experience shows that realistic estimates can probably be made only 2 or 3 years in advance rather than the 5 to 10 we have sometimes attempted.

3. Estimates on growth and prospects of the Soviet economy were extremely difficult to coordinate for some years. This situation eased somewhat in 1956, partly because our efforts to bring ORR and OIR together in pre-coordination paid off, partly because there was a somewhat too easy disposition on the part of all hands to credit the Soviet air of confidence and therefore to accept the USSR's 1960 plan goals. With Soviet plans now apparently running aground our estimative problems will be complicated once more. The work done on estimating Soviet military costs during the last two years has assisted a refinement of all prognostications on the Soviet economy, but cost estimates can be no better than the military procurement estimates that underlie them. As indicated in Para. 2, estimating the physical proportions of the Soviet military effort is becoming more difficult under the influence of changing weapons systems.

4. The subject of warning estimated in 11-3-57 proved very difficult because all the differences on Soviet military capabilities mentioned above enter into this subject. O/NE was inclined this year to reduce the estimate of warning capabilities, partly because of Soviet weapons developments, partly because of the experience obtained during the crises of late 1956. The NIC people felt their professional competence challenged, while on the other hand the Air Force pushes strongly for a Soviet capability to attack on a large scale without warning. The key issue on this subject is how far indications of Soviet military preparations

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would in any actual situation reveal a Soviet intention to attack, that is, whether intelligence could make a judgment that the USSR intended to attack and could exclude other interpretations of Soviet military preparations.

5. On Soviet internal political developments we have had no very great coordination problems. State is always very conservative as to speculative estimates which exceed the letter of the current evidence. This has led the O/NE staff to feel that we were being forced to restrict ourselves to merely recording current history rather than to estimate in a period when political changes of great potential importance seemed to be taking place in the USSR.

6. On Satellite developments, State's conservative approach has similarly inhibited the estimates in forecasting the range of possible developments. Our Satellite estimate early in 1956 did not sufficiently take account of Satellite opposition forces, largely for this reason. We could not of course have predicted events, but with a little more daring and imagination we could have embraced the subsequent developments within the range of possible outcomes.

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